

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The invention includes a method for conditioning a surface of a polishing pad after chemical-mechanical polishing of a semiconductor substrate with the pad surface. The method includes exposing the pad surface to steam, and the steam can comprise ammonium citrate. The invention also includes an apparatus for conditioning a surface of a polishing pad after chemical-mechanical polishing of a semiconductor substrate with the pad surface. The apparatus includes a conditioning stone, and a steam outlet port proximate the conditioning stone. The steam outlet port is configured to jet steam onto the pad surface during the conditioning of the pad surface.